

## *Vice Mayor and District IV Commissioner Romney Rogers*



My very best wishes are extended to you and your family for a Happy Thanksgiving!

**Homeless Update** – I would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to provide input on the homeless situation. Your concern is truly appreciated, and I recognize this is a very difficult and emotional issue. My position has always been that the City of Fort Lauderdale needs to be part of the community effort to address homelessness, but our Charter does not enable us to lead the effort. We simply don't have the resources. The Broward County Charter, however, does call for the County to address social services, and there's at least a \$20 million budget for that agency to do so.

That being said, the City, our neighbors, and our businesses have a long and distinguished history of compassion toward those in need. The homeless need shelter, clothing, and medical and social services to help them get back on their feet. In this regard, few cities have done more for the homeless than Fort Lauderdale. Taking a comprehensive approach, we work with numerous agencies, including non-profits, charitable groups, and faith-based organizations, which, like us, are dedicated to addressing the issue. In fact, this City Commission engages in substantial charitable work for the homeless here in South Florida. We volunteer at the local homeless assistance center, contribute financially to assist homeless programs and benefits, and work on several successful homeless veterans programs and projects.

Our new ordinances aim to reduce the public safety hazards and inappropriate nuisance activities negatively impacting our community. Quality of life and economic viability are directly linked to our stewardship of public spaces. As such, we have a responsibility to ensure that all our public spaces are accessible and can be safely enjoyed by everyone – families, children, residents, and visitors.

The outdoor food distribution ordinance will help ensure the health, safety, and welfare of our community. The ordinance does not prohibit feeding the homeless; it regulates the activity to ensure it is carried out in an appropriate, organized, clean, and healthy manner. Indoor food distribution is permitted at houses of worship throughout the City. By allowing houses of worship to conduct this activity, the City is actually increasing the number of locations where the homeless can properly receive this service. At recent outdoor food distributions, citations were rightly issued for non-compliance with the process enacted to ensure public health and safety. Contrary to some reports, no one was taken into custody.

You can view Mayor Seiler's recent interviews, read the ordinance, learn more about the City's homeless initiatives, and contribute to a solution all via the City's website at <http://fortlauderdale.gov/Home/Components/News/News/159/16?backlist=%2f>.

**All Aboard Florida (AAF) Project** – I attended the Public Meeting at the Convention Center on Oct. 28. The groundbreaking for the AAF Fort Lauderdale Station, NW 2 Avenue between NW 1 and 2 streets (west of the FEC Railway tracks), was held the next day. For more information on the project, see <http://www.allaboardflorida.com>.

**Riverwalk Water Trolley** – The City is sponsoring the new Riverwalk Water Trolley, along with the Downtown Fort Lauderdale Transportation Management Association (TMA) and Riverwalk Fort Lauderdale. (TMA administers service for the Sun Trolley; I am a member of TMA's Executive Board of Directors.) This complimentary service operates from 11 AM - 2 PM and 4 - 11 PM daily. Stops on the north side of the New River include Esplanade Park, Riverfront Plaza, Huizenga Plaza, and Riverwalk Laura Ward Park. Stops on the south include Smoker Park, Downtowner Saloon, New River Yacht Club, and Tarpon River. The Tracker App is at <http://www.suntrolley.com/water-trolley/>.

**Nominate a Neighbor** – The City is accepting nominations for the 2014-2015 Citizens' Committee of Recognition Awards. Visit <http://fortlauderdale.gov/ccr/index.htm> for details and a nomination packet. Nominations are due by 5 PM on Friday, Dec. 12, 2014. For more information, call 954-828-4742.

**Make A Difference Day** – On Oct. 25, I participated in some community projects around the City. More than 315 participants cleaned up the beach, removed invasive plants, and beautified neighborhoods. I volunteered at the Fort Lauderdale Woman's Club and the Fire Museum and stopped by Snyder Park and the Poinciana Park neighborhood.

**Rededication of Boat Ramp** – On Nov. 1, we hosted a public ceremony to celebrate completion of the renovated 15<sup>th</sup> Street Boat Ramp at 1784 SE 15 Street. The facility was rededicated as Cox's Landing, in honor of Robert O. "Bob" Cox, Fort Lauderdale's mayor from 1986-1991, who helped turn the City into a marine industry powerhouse.

**Household Hazardous Waste** – The next event is Dec. 6, City of Tamarac, 9 AM - 2 PM, 6011 Nob Hill Road. For 2015, see <http://fortlauderdale.gov/departments-/public-works-/sustainability-division/household-hazardous-waste>.

### **For Your Calendar**

- **Christmas on Las Olas:** Tuesday, Dec. 2, 5 - 10 PM, between SE 6<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> avenues.
- **Winterfest Boat Parade:** Saturday, Dec. 13. See <http://www.winterfestparade.com>.
- **Christmas Pageant** at First Baptist Church runs through Dec. 14. See <http://ChristmasTickets.com>.
- **Las Olas Sunday Market,** 9 AM - 2 PM, 333 E Las Olas.

➤ My City Hall Office Hours are Mondays from 2 - 5:30 PM and Tuesdays from 9 AM - Noon (in non-Commission weeks). For appointments, please contact MJ Matthews at 954-828-5028 or [mmatthews@fortlauderdale.gov](mailto:mmatthews@fortlauderdale.gov).